

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for recording interactions reflected in messages, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a first participant to a second participant prior to said message arriving at said second participant; wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed between the first participant and the second participant, wherein the message is addressed to said second participant; wherein said message includes requestor identifier information and provider identifier information;

~~wherein said intercepting device has access to the message and can interpret the identifier information contained within the message;~~

wherein said first participant is one of a service-requestor and a service provider and the second participant is the other of the service requestor and the service-provider;

wherein the message is addressed to or addressed from a particular address, the particular address being a unique Internet Protocol address;

wherein the particular address is associated with the provider;

wherein the provider provides a plurality of different types of content in response to requests addressed to the particular address;

wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from said service-requestor and said service-provider;

determining the identity of the service-requestor based on said requestor identifier information in said message;

determining the identity of the ~~service~~-provider based on said provider identifier information in said message;
based on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:
based on information in the message other than the particular address,
determining what content, of the plurality of different types of
content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being
provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
determining whether said ~~message content~~ has billing implications;
~~identifying, based on service identifying information contained in the~~
~~intercepted message, a service that is being requested by or~~
~~provided to said service requestor;~~
~~wherein the service identifying information includes data other~~
~~than said provider identifier information; and~~
if said ~~message content~~ has billing implications, sending billing data to a
billing service, the billing data being based on the determined
content including information related to 1) at least one of said
determined identities and 2) said service;
wherein the method is performed by one or more computer ~~devices~~ programmed
to be special purpose machines pursuant to instructions from program
software.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
determining that said ~~service content~~ is being or has been provided to said ~~service~~ requestor by said ~~service~~-provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining that said ~~service content~~ is being or has been provided to said ~~service~~ requestor by said ~~service~~-provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein:
the third party performs the step of billing on behalf of the ~~service~~-provider.
4. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for of~~ Claim 73 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:
using said log to charge a particular participant for said ~~service content~~, wherein
said particular participant is one of said first participant and said second participant.
5. (Canceled)
6. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for of~~ Claim 73 wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the ~~service content~~.
7. (Previously Presented) The method for Claim 73 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:
reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by a billing system.
8. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for of~~ Claim 1, further ~~comprisescomprising~~:
determining that a particular participant of the first participant and second participant must pre-pay for the ~~service content~~;
determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the ~~service content~~; and
determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the ~~service content~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:
 - inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the ~~service~~-provider or a requestor profile associated with the ~~service~~-requestor; and
 - based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the ~~service~~ requestor must pre-pay for the ~~service~~ content.
10. (Canceled)
11. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 1 further wherein the message is a response from the ~~service~~-provider and includes a price at which the ~~service~~-provider is willing to provide the ~~service~~content.
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)
14. (Canceled)
15. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 1 further comprising the step of updating a ~~service~~-requestor profile based on the ~~service~~content that is requested.
16. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 1 further comprising the step of decrementing an account balance of the first participant or second participant when the ~~service~~-requestor accesses the ~~service~~content.
17. (Canceled)
18. (Original) The method for Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:
 - locating a profile based on the identity of the first participant.

19–24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 18 further comprising updating the profile to award the ~~service~~-requestor a prize for having requested said ~~service~~ content.

26–28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

if the ~~service~~-requestor requires pre-authorization for ~~a service~~ the content, then sending the ~~service~~-requestor a payment authorization request message;

and

if the ~~service~~-requestor authorizes payment for the ~~service~~ content, then retransmitting the message to the ~~service~~-provider to obtain the ~~service~~ content for the ~~service~~-requestor.

30. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 29 further comprising inspecting a profile to determine whether the ~~service~~-requestor requires pre-authorization for the service_content.

31. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the ~~service~~-requestor has funds to pay for ~~a service~~ the content based on an authorization source.

32. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for-of~~ Claim 31 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

if the ~~service~~-requestor has the funds, then

causing the funds to be decremented from a requestor account associated with the ~~service~~-requestor; and retransmitting the message to the ~~service~~-provider to obtain the ~~service~~ content for the ~~service~~-requestor.

33. (Previously Presented) The method for Claim 31 wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for of~~ of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the ~~service~~-provider is an authorized partner; and if the ~~service~~-provider is an authorized partner, then retransmitting the message to the ~~service~~-provider to obtain ~~a service~~ the content.

37. (Currently Amended) The method for Claim 36 wherein the step of determining whether the ~~service~~-provider is an approved partner further comprises the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the ~~service~~ content involves a fee by inspecting a provider profile; if the ~~service~~ content does involve a fee, then establishing a secure connection with the provider; and authenticating the ~~service~~-provider by using an authentication mechanism.

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a first participant to a second participant prior to said message arriving at said second participant;
wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed between the first participant and the second participant,
wherein the message is addressed to said second participant;
wherein said message includes requestor identifier information and provider identifier information;
~~wherein said intercepting device has access to the message and can interpret the identifier information contained within the message;~~
wherein said first participant is one of a service-requestor and a service provider and the second participant is the other of the service requestor and the service provider;
wherein the message is addressed to or addressed from a particular address, the particular address being a unique Internet Protocol address;
wherein the particular address is associated with the provider;
wherein the provider provides a plurality of different types of content in response to requests addressed to the particular address;
wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from said service-requestor and said service-provider;
determining the identity of the service-requestor based on said requestor identifier information in said message;
determining the identity of the service-provider based on said provider identifier information in said message;
based on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:

based on information in the message other than the particular address,
determining what content, of the plurality of different types of
content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being
provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
determining whether said message content has billing implications;
~~identifying, based on service identifying information contained in the~~
~~intercepted message, a service that is being requested by or~~
~~provided to said service requestor;~~
~~wherein the service identifying information includes data other~~
~~than said provider identifier information; and~~
if said message content has billing implications, sending billing data to a
billing service, the billing data being based on the determined
content including information related to 1) at least one of said
determined identities and 2) said service.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

using said log to charge a particular participant for said service content, wherein said particular participant is one of said first participant and said second participant.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or second participant is to pay for the service content.

42. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or

more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by a billing system.

43. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that a particular participant of the first participant and second participant must pre-pay for the ~~service content~~;

determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the ~~service content~~; and

determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the ~~service content~~.

44. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the ~~service~~-provider or a requestor profile associated with the ~~service~~-requestor; and

based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the ~~service~~ requestor must pre-pay for the ~~service content~~.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 wherein the message is a response from the ~~service~~-provider and includes a price at which the ~~service~~-provider is willing to provide the ~~service content~~.

47. (Canceled)

48. (Canceled)

49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of updating a ~~service~~ requestor profile based on the ~~service content~~ that is requested.

51. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of decrementing an account balance of the first participant or second participant when the ~~service~~-requestor accesses the ~~service content~~.

52. (Canceled)

53. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:
locating a profile based on the identity of the first participant.

54–59. (Canceled)

60. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 53 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of updating the profile to award the ~~service~~-requestor a prize for having requested said ~~service content~~.

61–63. (Canceled)

64. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

if the service-requestor requires pre-authorization for a service the content, then

sending the service-requestor a payment authorization request message;

and

if the service-requestor authorizes payment for the-service content, then

retransmitting the message to the service-provider to obtain the service content for the service-requestor.

65. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 64 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of inspecting a profile to determine whether the service-requestor requires pre-authorization for the-service content.

66. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the service-requestor has funds to pay for a service the content based on an authorization source.

67. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 66 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

if the service-requestor has the funds, then

causing the funds to be decremented from a requestor account associated with the service-requestor; and

retransmitting the message to the service-provider to obtain the service content for the service-requestor.

68. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 66 wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

69. (Canceled)

70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the ~~service~~-provider is an authorized partner; and
if the ~~service~~-provider is an authorized partner, then

retransmitting the message to the ~~service~~-provider to obtain-a ~~service~~ the content.

72. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 71 wherein instructions for determining whether the ~~service~~-provider is an approved partner further comprise one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the ~~service~~ content involves a fee by inspecting a provider profile;

if the ~~service~~ content does involve a fee, then

establishing a secure connection with the provider; and
authenticating the ~~service~~-provider by using an authentication mechanism.

73. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
wherein the data sent to the billing service is based on the log.

74. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73, wherein:
the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device;
and
generating the log of said message occurs in response to the software determining
that the message has billing implications.
75. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73, wherein:
the intercepting device generates the log without determining whether the message
has billing implications; and
determining whether the message has billing implications further comprises
analyzing the log of said message.
76. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 75, further comprising, at an
aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the
software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.
77. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising billing the
~~service~~ provider for providing the ~~service~~ content.
- 78.-83. (Canceled)
84. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38,
further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or
more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
wherein the data sent to the billing service is based on the log.
85. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84,
wherein:

the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device;
and
generating the log of said message occurs in response to the software determining
that the message has billing implications.

86. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84,
wherein:
the intercepting device generates the log without determining whether the message
has billing implications; and
determining whether the message has billing implications further comprises
analyzing the log of said message.
87. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 86,
further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or
more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:
at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log,
wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an
aggregation engine.
88. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further
storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more
processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:
determining that said service-content is being or has been provided to said service
requestor by said service-provider through, at least in part, the intercepted
message;
wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining
that said service-content is being or has been provided to said service
requestor by said service-provider through, at least in part, the intercepted
message.

89. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 88, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

billing the ~~service~~-provider for providing the ~~service~~ content.

90.–95. (Canceled)

96. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said first participant is the ~~service~~-provider and the second participant is the ~~service~~-requestor.

97. (Canceled)

98. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 97, wherein the provider identifier information ~~corresponds to an IP~~ is the address and wherein the ~~service identifying~~ information includes at least a path in said single ~~information based upon which the content is determined~~ includes a URL path.

99. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, wherein said first participant is the ~~service~~-provider and the second participant is the ~~service~~-requestor.

100. (Canceled)

101. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, wherein the provider identifier information ~~corresponds to an IP~~ is the address and wherein the ~~service identifying~~ information includes at least a path in said single ~~information based upon which the content is determined~~ includes a URL path.

102.–115. (Canceled)

116. (New) A method comprising:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a provider to a requestor, prior to said message being received by the requestor;
wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed between the provider and the requestor, wherein the message is addressed to the requestor;
wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from said requestor and said provider;
based on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:
inspecting the message to determine what content, of a plurality of different types of content, is being provided by the provider in the message;
determining whether said content has billing implications;
if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based on the determined content;
wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

117. (New) The method of Claim 116 further comprising the steps of:
determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.

118. (New) The method of Claim 116 further wherein the message is a response from the provider and includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide the content.

119. (New) The method of Claim 116, further comprising billing the provider for providing the content.

120. (New) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 116.

121. (New) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 117.

122. (New) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 118.

123. (New) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 119.